

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Declassified Case: NW# 78134 Date:
08-25-2025

2459

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Vladimir Putin, Russia
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Vladimir Putin

Notetakers: Jenna Galyean, Chris Fatheree,
David Lee and Jeff Blair

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

DATE, TIME April 8, 2004, 7:40 - 7:59 a.m., CDT
AND PLACE: Crawford, Texas

The President: Hi, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: Hi, George. (U)

The President: How are you, sir? (U)

President Putin: Great. I'm very glad to hear your voice. (U)

The President: Thank you for calling and for the contacts with Sergei and other members of your administration. Do you want me to start? (U)

President Putin: Please go ahead. I'm all ears. (U)

The President: I read what Sergei wrote in the Wall Street Journal about NATO expansion and NATO-Russian and U.S.-Russian relations. They were good points and I agreed with most of them. It was well thought out, well constructed, and I appreciated it. Obviously, a place where relations can be improved, aside from the economic front is the war on terror. Secondly, the other thing is Iraq. I really appreciate the messages we have been getting that there is a chance you could help. We are now facing a Shi'a hothead cleric, remnants of Saddam's regime, plus a couple of

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by: Gregory L. Schulte
Reason: 1.5(d)
Declassify on: 4/9/14

(al-Qaida in there, and it's tough fighting. We will take them down one by one. What I appreciated was other countries fear tough action, but you have sent a positive message. That is really what I had on my mind. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, George, for the call. This is exactly the time where we should not lose sight of each other, especially at a time in the world when uneasy things are emerging. I have just had a meeting with the new Secretary General of NATO in Moscow. We had a good conversation and from my perspective it was very productive. I am aware of the fact that at the moment you are involved in Iraqi developments. We are following this closely too. It is a very uneasy day for you as Ms. Rice is speaking before Congress. (S)

The President: She will do a great job. (U)

(President Putin: I would think so. I am aware of the way the previous Administration dealt with fighting terror versus what your administration is doing along those lines. I do have my own view of these things, but I will not dwell on them. I'm confident Ms. Rice is going to do fine. As regards the situation in Iraq, you know on several occasions I reminded you of the possibility of an exacerbation of the situation in Iraq in relation to the Shiites. About a year ago, I mentioned this to Tony Blair. I recall him saying that Iranian Shiites and Iraqi Shiites are two different things. I responded that you are right and have a long-term record of colonial experience, but I have deep concerns. I mentioned the same thing to your Secretary of State recently. Now from what we have witnessed and seen on the ground, I understand it full well. Incidentally, I met with Schroeder and Chirac, and even if they don't have a common position with you on Iraq, they seek to work jointly with all parties involved to resolve the problems. Yesterday, I had a phone call with Aznar. I mentioned to him, and on TV publicly explained, that what happened in Spain set a bad political precedent. Even if we had a different view of Iraq 18 months ago, the fact that terrorists have attained a political goal by resorting to terror, that is horrendous. I think it's important to shore up Aznar. I have invited him to come Russia, and he will likely come to St. Petersburg in June. I would also like to bring your attention to the state of affairs in Kosovo. On this point I will not expand, but we should pay close attention to this matter. Thank you for your message on Afghanistan as the central Asian region is adjacent to this area and serious acts of terrorism have been perpetuated in Uzbekistan. I think in this regard it is important to support the leaders of that area. At the same time, I would like to inform you

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3

confidentially about a conversation I had with the President of Kazakhstan. He asserted to me that allegedly in the U.S. there are investigations of criminal cases and some are linking his name to those cases. That could shake his position, and he is concerned. Also, I expect Ms. Rice to visit us in Moscow this month. There is agreement for a meeting with my chief of administration, Mr. Medvedev. My new Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov will be in Washington on May 14. The Foreign Ministers will help us prepare for the upcoming G-8 meeting at Sea Island. I have observed how pressure has been applied to you, and has been increased, so I'm glad to hear your voice is strong and confident.

(S)

The President: Thank you, Vladimir. One reason why is I appreciate my friends. Even though we have differences of opinion sometimes, I am strengthened by good, honest friends who are sympathetic. I view you as a friend and I thank you very much. To the extent that we can work together in Iraq or fighting terrorism, it's important that we do so. In my judgment, our relationship is very good. There are more relationships between U.S. companies and Russia than ever before. Obviously, the way you have handled U.S. relations hasn't hurt you. At home they respect you and support you. Some are suspicious of U.S. motives and we have to help work through those so that people understand our desire for new relationships in such a way that strengthens both societies, not just one or the other. The other thing is the tougher the situation gets, I am the kind of guy who rises to the challenge. A lot of what you are reading here in America is pure politics. I'm looking forward to the battle. I appreciate it very much. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, George. I am very happy to have this contact and to be in touch. Things are becoming more difficult, but I'm sure you will succeed. (S)

The President: Yes, sir. (U)

President Putin: I'm looking forward to seeing you soon. All the best to Laura and your family. (U)

The President: Same to you. (U)

President Putin: Good-bye. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~